

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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SAB-01 AID-05 IO-10 TRSE-00 /074 W

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R 151236Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7968

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 5348

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR IS MILI

SUBJECT: NEW TENSIONS OVER SHARON APPOINTMENT

REF: TEL AVIV 3558

1. INCIPIENT POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER RABIN AN HIS ADVISOR ARIEL" ARIK" SHARON ON ONE HAND ANDDEFENSE MINISER PERS AND CHIEF OF STAFF GUR ON OTHE HAS SURFACED AGAIN IN MINI-FLAP ARISING OUT OF RABIN'S DECISION LAST WEEK TO CONDUCT A FRONTLINE TOUR OF THE PASSES. WHILE OSTENSIBLE ISSUE WAS QUESTON OF WHETHR IT WAS APPROPRIATE FOR RABIN TO BRING HIS ADVISER WITH HIM ON SUCH A TOUR, REAL ISSUE WAS DEEPENING CONCERN OF PERES AND GUR THAT SHARON APPOINTMEN MAY BE UNDERCUTTING THEIR AUTHORITY, AND MAY PRESAGE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN RABIN AND THEMSELVES ON POLICY DECISIONS RE IDF STRATEGY AND PREPAREDNESS. FOLLOWING IS EMBASSY RRECONSTRUCTION OF INCIDENT, BASED ON PRESS AND OTHER SOURCES.
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2. RABIN LASTWEEK ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO TOUR MITLA AND GIDI PASSES" IN ORDER TO EXAMINE VITAL POINTS" AND INDICATED THAT SHARON WOULD BE ACCOMPANYING HIM. GUR REPORTEDLY FIRS INFORMED

PERES THT IN TIS CASE HE WOULD BRING NO OTHER SENIOR OFFICERS WITH HIM AND THEN CHANGED THIS TO SAY THAT HE WOULD NOT COME ON TOUR AT ALL. AT THAT POINT, RABIN SENT WORD BACK THAT HE WAS CANCELLING TOUR UNTIL MATTER WAS CLARIFIED. RABIN THEN CALLED IN PERES AND JUSTICE MINISTER ZADOK, ASKING LATTER FOR ADVIE ON LEGAL STATUS OF SHARON APPOINTMENT. ZADOK REAFFIRMED LEGAL OPINION HE HAD FURNISHED RABIN EARLIER THIS SUMMER, TO EFFECT THAT PRIME MINISTER COULD USE HIS ADVISERS AS HE LIKES. UPSHOT OF THESE MEETINGS WAS THAT TOUR OF PASSES TOOK PLACE ON AUGUST 9 WITH BOTH SHARON AND GUR IN ATTENDANCE. DISTINCTLY TENSE ATMOSPHERE PREVAILED. ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, SHARON COMMENTED DURING TOUR THAT SOUTHERN COMMAND CLEARLY WAS NOT READY FOR NEW WAR, LEADING TO BITTEREXCHANE WITH GUR WHO VIGOROUSLY REJECTD THE CHARGE,

3. COMMENT: BROUHAHA OVER" AFFAIR OF SHARON'S TOUR THROUGH THE PASSES" IS BY ITSELF NOT A MAJOR INCIDENT, AND WE DO NOT EXPECT ANY DRAMATIC DEV- ELOPMENTS SUCH AS RESIGNATIONS TO ARISE FROM IT. IT IS HOWEVER, CLEAR CONFIRMATION OF DISSATISFACTION ON PART OF PERES AND GUR WITH SHARON APPOINTMENT, AND OFKRICTION IN RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RABIN AND PERES WHICH HAS RESULTED FROM IT. MORE SERIOUS QUESTONS MAY ARISE IF AND WHEN PRIME MINISTER, UPON SHARON'S RECOMMENDATON, ATTEMPTS TO IMPL- MENT CHANGES IN STRATEGIC OR OTHER POLICY CONSID- ERATIONS AFFECTING THE IDF WHICH MIGHT BE UNACCEPT- ABLE TO GUR AND/OR PERES.
TOON

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